The Reconstructionist

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dicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of ael's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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by

MILTON STEINBERG

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EDITORIALS

THE CRISIS IN UJA

IT was once observed that in the pre-war years Hitler invariably contrived his coups and manufactured political crises to fall on weekends, when British officialdom would be away from Downing Street enjoying a long week-end. Just now, when we are rapidly approaching the vacation season, and one's thoughts turn to lazy, relaxing days in the sun, American Jewry is confronted with a major crisis. This one, however, that looms up forebodingly, right ahead of us, is of no one's contrivance. Obdurate circumstances alone have conspired to challenge our ability to meet a critical situation quickly and generously.

The UJA faces the most critical days of its career. Here are the facts, simple and ineluctable: On July 1st, UNRRA goes out of existence. The International Relief Organization (UNRRA's successor) will not begin to operate until the fall of the year. IRO's operations will be limited in the extreme. Its total budget is hardly more than one-fifth that of UNRRA's. The American Army of Occupation, because of budgetary restrictions, has already cut its allotment of relief supplies for the DP's. Other such cuts may be anticipated. That is the picture on the side of governmental agencies. On the domestic scene, the current UJA campaign is lagging badly in terms of cash receipts. So delayed and halting is the redemption of pledges of contributions that resort has been had to borrowing from the banks in anticipation of such redemptions. Such borrowings, when every dollar counts, represent, in the form of interest charges, a drain on total income. Further, even if all campaign pledges were to be honored promptly, the JDC cannot see its way clear financially to the end of the year in view of the situation described above.

It takes but little imagination to foresee what calamitous prospects this picture opens up. Demoralization and despair are imminent in the DP camps. And further lowering of their present calory totals can but lead these despairing people to "create an incident or series of incidents between them and some of the German population or even between them and soldiers of the American army." (This last quotation is from a recent address by General Joseph T. McNarney, former commander of the United States Forces in Europe.)

We American Jews who have carried the financial burden so far and so magnificently, dare not seek any easing of our responsibility in the face of this crisis. Indeed, we must rise to meet it. Our brethren, these living brands that have been plucked from the fire, must be sustained in body and spirit. Concretely, who can plan vacation pleasures without first

meeting one's obligation to the UJA? In addition to prompt payment of pledges, additional contributions and new sources for contributions will have to be found. Crisis takes no holiday; neither should we, until we have met it quickly and generously.

END ANARCHY IN NEW YORK CITY JEWRY

IN New York, the United Jewish Appeal for this year has included the Joint Defense Appeal of the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, National Jewish Welfare Board and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. These organizations have eliminated their 1947 drives in order to unite in one great UJA drive. In so doing they established a claim to shares in the $65,000,000 which was New York's quota for the original UJA.

In the current issue of *The Menorah Journal*, Mr. Henry Hurwitz analyzes the full significance of this merger in New York. He points out that these organizations were "arbitrarily tacked on by the small group of men who are running the campaign in New York as a result of behind-closed-doors pressures that have nothing whatsoever to do either with the merits, the needs or the programs of the Joint Distribution Committee, United Palestine Appeal and the United Service for New Americans." Besides the undemocratic manner in which this merger was effected there is the very real problem of the ethics of appealing to Jews and non-Jews alike in the name of the unfortunate DP's in order to make possible a substantial income to organizations which have nothing whatever to do with that cause. Mr. Hurwitz demonstrates that the J.D.A. has been assigned 2½ million dollars as its share of the New York appeal, when as a matter of fact neither in 1945 nor 1946 did the J.D.A. ever raise more than $1,880,000 net. While his article was written before the UJA crisis developed, he apparently foresaw the inevitable conflict which must arise between the needs of UJA and the needs of the organizations which have been adopted by it, and he suggests that "not a dollar should be distributed to any of those extra beneficiaries before the full $65,000,000 originally sought for the three constituents of the United Jewish Appeal alone is secured. If the full amount of the $65,000,000 is not raised in New York then nothing should accrue to the tacked-on organizations."

Clearly, this is a complex and serious problem. New York holds the largest group of Jews in the world today—undoubtedly the most powerful group. The Jews of New York constitute practically half the Jews of the United States. Their share of the UJA appeal is more than a third of the total. What a tragic commentary upon the anarchy that prevails in this the largest Jewish community! When a small group of people can come together and make decisions of such far-reaching consequence without direct responsibility to a constituency, when certain organizations can be included in a drive and others omitted without the public's knowing on what basis some are brought in and others left out, then New York Jewry as a whole must be indicted for incompetence and criminal neligence. Whether the UJA leaders are right in this respect or that, whether Mr. Hurwitz is correct in this charge or that, the situation stands self-condemned. No time should be lost before responsible leaders in New York come together to discuss plans for the creation of an organization of the New York Jewish community. The present primitive chaos dare not continue. It may be that this large area will have

to be divided into ten or twenty communities. It may be that a welfare fund should be established or that a Community Council might be preferable. But there seems to be no doubt whatsoever that action is called for without delay. The generous Jews of New York will not tolerate for long the secrecy that envelopes allocations to various organizations. They will insist upon knowing how the proceeds of a campaign are to be distributed and for what reason. When our brothers and sisters in Europe cry for help we cannot afford to do anything that will jeopardize the free flow of funds from sincere and conscientious contributors. As soon as this immediate crisis is over the leaders of the U.J.A. ought to call a conference to discuss plans for a rational and decent organization of the community which will make it more representative, more responsible and more inclusive.

LAYMEN FACE CONGREGATIONAL PROBLEMS

PRESIDENTS of member congregations affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations came to Cincinnati from all parts of the country a few weeks ago to discuss common problems and common objectives. Many important questions were considered, among them the need for greater lay participation in religious life, the need for developing new congregations, and methods to bring the unaffiliated into Jewish religious life.

One matter to which attention was paid was the "summer vacation" in Jewish religious life. Why does congregational activity virtually cease during the summer months? This has become glaringly evident. One delegate, in analyzing the causes for this development, attributed it to the tendency of "our laymen to leave religious practice to a professional corps." If this be true, then ways must be found to assure active lay participation in congregational activities not only during the congregational season but during the summer as well.

The summer, instead of being merely a hiatus, could be used as the opportunity to institute programs which, because of pressure of events during the conventional congregational season, are difficult to carry through. Some suggestions were made by the conference such as distributing printed sermonettes and Bible lessons to members on vacation, setting up a program of summer reading, maintaining contact with the children of the religious schools wherever they spend the summer. To these we might add, organizing discussion groups to meet at regular intervals, conducting seminars, lecture series, forum discussions. Projects such as these could be undertaken both at home and at resort towns patronized by Jews. Such towns, in particular, are fertile ground for experimentation with new forms of summer participation in Jewish life.

Another basic issue to which these laymen paid particular attention was the relative value of the large, medium sized and small congregation.

It was apparent to them that many congregations had become so large that personal contacts between rabbi and member, and between member and member, were well nigh impossible. Community feeling and group loyalty were disappearing and it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain the friendly spirit upon which depends a healthy and vigorous congregational life. In the smaller congregation, a stronger personal relationship could be established, responsibility more easily distributed, and the feeling of "at homeness" cultivated. The rabbi, too, could be a more important factor in the individual life of the mem-

bers of such a congregation. On the other hand, for sustained educational activity and for inter-communal participation, it was recognized that the larger unit was the better instrument.

The conference did not attempt to solve these problems. The factors involved are too fundamental in Jewish life to be successfully resolved in one or two meetings. They must be debated, explored and considered in all their aspects for a period of time much longer than the delegates had at their disposal.

However, the significance of this conference lies in the fact that the issues were discussed by *laymen* and that laymen believed that these problems deserved their serious consideration. When laymen interest themselves in matters so often the province of the rabbi or a small professional committee, we can have hope that Jewish religious life is giving evidence of revitalization and reinvigoration.

REALITIES AND VALUES

HERE IS A QUESTION FOR A Jewish "Information, Please": Who said the following: "In Palestine you will get a new sense, a new appreciation, a new understanding of the Jewish people. In observing on the spot in Palestine the creative development there, Jewish theological students will learn that from a Jewish point of view the answer to the so-called problem is more Jewishness, not less. Returning from 'their interneship' rabbinical students will be in a better position to transmit the sense of Jewish creativeness. In doing this they will help give that inner strength and confidence, that feeling of quiet dignity which the true aristocrat possesses and which makes him proof against those who would malign him. Thus the Jews in Palestine are doing more than building a new Homeland; they are offering moral and ethical reinforcement to Jews everywhere." Answer: Not the Reconstructionist Editorial Board, but Mr. James G. McDonald speaking at the Commencement exercises at the Jewish Institute of Religion.

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SOME WEEKS AGO BARTLEY Crum demanded that the State Department publish the material in its possession on the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem showing his collaboration with the Nazis during the war. The State department never made a reply. We mentioned this editorially some time thereafter, and now again a report from Washington says that Senator Wagner has called on the State Department to let the world know the truth about this enemy of the Allies. At this moment when the Palestine question is being investigated by the U.N. it may be a matter of crucial importance for these documents to be revealed. There ought to be wide-spread demand on the part of many American citizens to bring to light this vital evidence.

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THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR Judaism usually gets very busy at the wrong time. When it is a matter of Jewish immigration into Palestine the Council publicly declares against any kind of racial or religious discrimination in immigration. They don't think the Jews ought to have any more rights to Palestine than anybody else. Why then the unusual silence when the following item appeared, dated June 10th, from Lima, Peru?: "An agreement between the Peruvian government and the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees for the admission of approximately 6,000 refugees and DP's was announced here. At least 75 percent of the prospective immigrants must be Catholic." If the Ameri-

can Council for Judaism has protested we must have overlooked it.

▼

THE ATTITUDE OF THE BRITISH Labor Party on Palestine is unfortunately not characteristic only of British Socialists. An international Socialist conference was held recently in Zurich, Switzerland, and closed without any debate on the Palestine question though such a discussion had been demanded by the Palestine delegate, Goldie Myerson, deputy political chief of the Jewish Agency. It is a sad commentary indeed on the moral bankruptcy of Socialism today that such an international conference could be held without producing a single word on so fundamental a question as Jewish rights to Palestine. The silence is particularly distressing in view of the magnificent contribution which Jewish labor in Palestine is making to the advancement of the socialist ideal.

▼

SOMETIMES WE THINK WE ARE helping a cause when we are actually embarrassing it. We Reconstructionists are all for reading the Bible and studying it because we think it's the source of most important values in our civilization. But now a despatch comes from London to the effect that Queen Elizabeth reads the Bible every day. Perhaps we are not really familiar enough with the activities and opinions of Queen Elizabeth, but from this distance we confess we cannot see that her Bible reading has made much difference.

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A MOST INTERESTING EXPERIment will take place in Boston this summer when 35 theological students from 7 Protestant denominations will take a six weeks' course at the Institute of Pastoral Care conducted at the Massachusetts General Hospital. The purpose of the course is to help ministers help their people by knowing something about psychosomatic medicine, psychiatry and related subjects. A second course which will include Jewish students will follow the present one. We believe that Seminaries throughout the country will be very much interested to know the results of this experiment.

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THE WAR OF THE SEXES GOES on. A 23rd Annual Montreal-Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada approved the ordination of married women to the ministry. Unmarried women were permitted heretofore, but this is the first time a married woman requested ordination. On the other hand, word comes from Copenhagen that all but one of Denmark's nine Lutheran bishops have announced that they will refuse to ordain a young woman theological graduate who wants to become the country's first minister of her sex. We have consistently pleaded for equality of the sexes in the Jewish religion and now the same fight is on in several other religious groups. Under present conditions Jews are not likely, in the diaspora at least, to take the lead in matters of this sort. When the equality of the sexes becomes the norm among the non-Jews the chances of achieving it for ourselves will be the greater.

WE SUSPEND PUBLICATION UNTIL THE FALL

This is the final issue of The RECONSTRUCTIONIST for the summer. We resume publication early in October. Our office is open and our staff will be happy to service our readers with Reconstructionist literature, with suggestions for programs, study group activities and the like, throughout the summer.

We wish to thank all of our readers for their continued interest and cooperation.

New Anthologies of Hebrew Literature

By JACOB KABAKOFF

IN the history of Hebrew literature, volumes of collected works have a long and honored tradition. Many of our foremost modern Hebrew authors have been associated with such literary undertakings as editors, and others have published some of their finest writings in collections. There is a certain stability about these volumes, and when they appear year after year, they develop a specific character of their own. While attempting to bring works of lasting value to the reader, they more often than not try also to keep abreast of the times and, from their yearly vantage-point, to survey Jewish life and problems.

We shall consider some of the important volumes of this type appearing regularly in Palestine and America. We cannot hope to touch upon all the articles and literary contributions in each of them but we can deal with some of the representative ones and discuss the general character of these literary projects.

Three Palestine Year Books

In addition to various collective volumes devoted to specific themes and needs, there are currently published in Palestine three year-books: *Keneset, Luah Ha-aretz* and *Shenaton Davar*. Each of these volumes has its own appeal and character. *Keneset* (Gathering) is a literary annual in the tradition of Bialik, whom it honors regularly with special studies and contributions. *Luah Ha-aretz* (Ha-aretz Almanac), published by the daily newspaper of that name, combines some of the practical features of an almanac with literary contributions, and *Shenaton Davar* (Davar Yearbook), which last year bore the name of the year *Tov Shin He* (5705), has a wide scope encompassing not only original literary works but also surveys of various aspects of Jewish life in Palestine and abroad and treatments of important movements and personalities.

Keneset, Volume X

The tenth volume of *Keneset,* edited by Jacob Cohen, the late Fishel Lachover and Zvi Woyslavsky, is a publication of the Bialik Foundation of the Jewish Agency and covers the years 5705-06. It follows its established pattern of presenting in four sections, Bialik studies, *belles-lettres,* research articles and surveys of the Jewish scene. Each year the editors bring us additional items of unpublished Bialikana, and it is a tribute to the genius of the national poet that these have still not been exhausted. This time we are presented with two of Bialik's letters to Israel Davidson regarding the publication of Ibn Gabirol's poetry, in which Bialik was engaged. It is characteristic of Bialik that, after he asks Davidson's advice, he urges him to write in Hebrew, and offers him the facilities of his publishing house. A second item is a lecture which Bialik once delivered on "The Teaching of *Agadah* in the School," in which the poet offers many insights into the essence of this literary form. His own contribution to the popularization of the *agadah* through the *Sefer Ha-agadah* is subjected to a critical analysis by A. A. Halevi, who concludes that Bialik's pioneer effort must be supplemented by other compilations with a clearer division of material.

Other Bialik studies include S. Zemach's appraisal of "Bialik and His Influence," in which he explains how, when a poet is accepted as a symbol, his every poem is taken to reflect the mood of his generation; and Dr. Baruch Kurz-

weil's discussion of the ambivalence in the poet's approach to Jewish tradition and the world. On the one hand, we find in Bialik's poetry protest against the Jewish past and, on the other, idealization of the Jewish tradition. Dr. Kurzweil attempts to resolve this difficulty by viewing it as part of the spiritual make-up of Bialik, the chastiser and prophet.

The ten published volumes of *Keneset* have brought us a considerable amount of new material on Bialik. Taken together with F. Lachover's detailed, analytical biography of the poet and Jacob Fichman's recent interpretative book on "The Poetry of Bialik," they represent a serious attempt to study and evaluate the poet. The time is ripe for an English monograph that will draw upon this material and make its results available.

Of the varied contributions to the section of *belles-lettres,* we single out for mention two items of an historical nature. They represent a trend on the part of various Palestinian authors to deal with historical themes not merely for the purpose of romanticizing the past but for suggesting striking parallels with the present situation. The novelist Asher Barash, in his biblical story entitled "Saul and the Asses," interprets the tragic events in the career of Saul and the fall of his kingdom as the outcome of his youthful quest. Saul went in search of his father's asses and found the kingdom instead. The author takes us through some excellent descriptive chapters to the dramatic close of Saul's life at Gilboa, where in his dying moments he has a vision of the asses for which he sought as a young man. A closer parallel to the events in our day is seen in A. Ashman's three-act play "Alexandra the Hasmonean," which deals with the last of the line of the Maccabees. Alexandra is the symbol of resistance to the rule of Herod, in whose castle she continued to live after the murder of her daughter. The play develops the events leading to the rebellion against Herod and its ultimate repression. Alexandra goes to her death happy in the knowledge that the opposition of her people to tyranny will continue. The author's purpose in finding a parallel for Jewish resistance today is very much in evidence in the actions and speeches of his heroine.

A number of the short poetic works appearing in the section, particularly those of Jacob Cohen and S. Shalom, deal with the theme of protest against the world's evil which is a recurring one in recent Palestinian Hebrew poetry. Included among the poems is one by the American Hebrew poet, Gabriel Preil, who brings us his reflections on visiting "An American Cemetery."

We shall merely mention the contributions in the concluding sections. The research section contains, among others, three papers on biblical subjects by Ezekiel Kaufman, Y. Ben-Zvi and N. H. Torcyzner. The concluding section brings us authoritative surveys of events by such men as Isaac Gruenbaum, Moshe Kleinman and David Horowitz. A literary survey by Emanuel Ben-Gurion closes the volume.

Luah Ha-aretz, 5707

Luah Ha-aretz for 5707 is more compact and utilitarian, offering surveys of the year's events in Palestine and abroad. Yet it devotes a good part of its pages to discussion and literature. Here Professor R. Koebner's essay on "How to Learn from History" and Simon Halkin's "Some Characteristics of American Jews" are of the greatest interest.

Prof. Koebner, who teaches history at the Hebrew University, deals with his theme on a practical as well as a theoretical plane. He takes up the problem of our relationship with Britain and tries to present a sober analysis of the im-

plication of learning from history in our present struggle. He considers it dangerous to draw parallels from the ancient period of our struggle in Palestine or to follow the pattern of other revolutions. Palestine is not Ireland or America or South Africa.

Simon Halkin's study is part of a larger essay on American Jewry. In this section he points out that the American Jewish masses lack a sense of history and show unconcern for all the theorizing of American Jewish thought about the future of the American Jewish community. He finds that the American Jewish community has been unable to produce Jewish cultural values because of the continuing process of adjustment and Americanization. He feels that Jewish life here can be strengthened only if American Jewish thought will accept in full the implications of the Zionist solution for America as well as for other countries. That Halkin's arguments run counter to the accepted point of view goes without saying. He will probably receive a more sympathetic hearing in Palestine than in this country.

We shall touch but briefly on some of the literary contributions. Represented in this section are Samuel J. Agnon, Yitzhak Shenberg and Hayyim Hazaz with stories, and Jacob Fichman, Abraham Shlonsky, Natan Alterman and Leah Goldberg with poems. These writers are grouped together because they are among the regular contributors to the newspaper, *Ha-aretz*.

In his story entitled "Two Scholars Who Lived in Our City," Agnon continues with great skill the task of interpreting our folklore. He describes the relationship between two *talmide hakhamim,* one bitterly revengeful and the other, easy-going and forgiving. Yet despite the contrast and conflicts between them, they both earn our respect because of their sincerity. Shenberg brings us another of his descriptions of kibbutz life, this time giving a psychological twist to the story of a handicapped watchman. Hazaz, who in recent years has done much to portray Yemenite life in Palestine, here paints a picture of the society life led by certain groups in Palestine in imitation of the British. Outstanding among the poems is Fichman's lyrical "Warsaw." Though nothing remains of the city, its memory will not pass as long as a single Jewish heart beats. The poem ends with a paean of praise to the Warsaw Ghetto defenders.

Shenaton Davar, 5705

Of the three Palestine yearbooks under review, *Tov Shin He,* published by the labor daily *Davar* and edited by Zalman Rubashov, has the widest scope and largest selection of material. The close to six hundred packed pages are given over to *belles-lettres* and literary criticism, world and Jewish problems, Zionism and Palestine, anniversaries and personalities. Many of the articles present historical and documentary material on the Jewish tragedy, and the suffering of the war years is reflected in the literary contributions as well.

Dvorah Baron's poignant story of Jewish town life with its recurring pogroms is reinforced, as it were, by Mordecai Strigler's story of modern terror, "The Night in Maidenek." Many of the other short stories and poems bend under the weight of Jewish suffering. In his "Song of Peace," which opens the volume, Fichman rightly says that never did a poet feel so strange, so ashamed when singing of peace. Yitzkhak Lamdan and S. Shalom are among the poets who give us additional poems in their cycle of bitter poetry of protest. Would that these poems could be made available for all to read and feel! Of the contributions of the

younger Palestinian writers, Yigael Mosinson's story of life in a collective settlement, with its accompanying personal difficulties during the housing shortage, is the most noteworthy.

Among the articles of criticism, Abraham Kriv's analysis of Europeanism and traditionalism in Hebrew literature, as represented by Frishman and Feierberg respectively, is an example of the type of writing which is establishing for him a name among our leading literary critics. A. Steinman's memoirs and reflections on the late novelist A. A. Kabak are valuable for an understanding of the latter's works, particularly during his last period in which he underwent a spiritual change and turned to religious values. Similarly, E. Ben-Gurion's memoirs of the last days of his father, Micah Joseph Berdichewsky, add to our knowledge of the life and character of this writer.

The value of *Tov Shin He* as a handbook is evident in its articles on the Jews in the Polish ghettoes, the Jewish resistance movement in France and the Jewish parachutists. The studies on Palestine economy, settlement, industry, land redemption and the Histadrut make this section indispensable for the student of Palestine affairs. Nor is the cultural life overlooked. There is a detailed listing of the more than eight hundred books which appeared during the year, as well as articles on education and the theatre. Interest in America is reflected in but one contribution dealing with Yiddish creativity in this country. Enzo Sereni, Hannah Senesh and Ernst Cassirer are among the departed personalities that receive careful treatment in the closing section.

Two Collective Volumes Published in America

In America we can point to two large collective volumes which have appeared during the past year: *Hatekufah* and *Sefer Hashanah Liyehudei Amerika.* The renewal of the publication of *Hatekufah* in this country has been greeted on all sides as an encouraging sign for American Hebrew letters. This publication, launched by the late Abraham J. Stybel, was issued successively in Poland, Germany and Palestine and, after an interval of almost ten years, has reappeared in this country. This is significant because *Hatekufah* transcends our local boundaries and takes in Palestine writers as well. The new double volume of *Sefer Hashanah* is the largest to have appeared thus far and contains the contributions of over forty American Hebrew writers. The sustained publication of two such volumes could well contribute to the encouragement of Hebrew creativity among Jewish scholars and writers in this country.

Hatekufah, Volumes XXX-XXXI

The *Hatekufah,* volumes xxx-xxxi edited by Aaron Zeitlin and Eisig Silberschlag, follows the pattern of previous volumes and falls into the same sections. Various fields of interest, such as *belles-lettres,* translation (a pet project of the publisher), articles, research, and notes and reviews are included. This richness of material is imposing, but it was inevitable, perhaps, that some sections should seem weaker by comparison than the others.

There is a good deal of variety in the *belles-lettres* offered by *Hatekufah.* One questions, however, the wisdom of devoting almost one hundred pages to Jacob Cohen's five-act tragedy entitled "Jepthah," thus contributing to the bulk and expense of the volume. While the style is admirable, there is nothing exceptional in the interpretation of Jepthah's tragic vow and its results. Of the stories, Harry Sackler's portrayal of the Besht is most

vivid. We have here an account of the Besht's attempted trip to Palestine and a discussion of the Hasidic point of view on the question of whether redemption can come to Jews only in Palestine or also elsewhere in the world. Reuben Wallenrod's story of American Jewish life describes the difficulties encountered by Benny Cohen and his family when they are called upon to share a crowded apartment with a refugee brother's family.

Of the poetic works, Aaron Zeitlin's "Joseph Della Rina" and Abraham Regelson's "Engraved Letters" are most noteworthy. Zeitlin has given a new twist tto the folk-theme of Della Rina's struggle to bring about redemption. In his poem, Lillit, the incarnation of evil wants to be subjugated so that out of the very depths of impurity redemption should spring. Regelson is highly original even if at times ornate in his poem to the Hebrew language. He sings of its graces and grandeur, its grammatical forms and constructions.

The section of articles offers a combination of such subjects as current Jewish problems, literary criticism and popular studies. In this section, Nissan Touroff's study of the psychology of suicide and Jochanan Twersky's article on Houston Stewart Chamberlain are the most rewarding. There are two articles of literary criticism—S. Niger's far too lengthy study of J. L. Perez's Hebrew writings and M. Ribalow's survey of the works of Shalom. Dr. Raisin's biography of Benjamin Franklin brings a touch of America to the volume.

We merely mention the research articles contributed by M. Lutzki, Louis Finkelstein, Meyer Waxman and Samuel I. Feigin. The notes on literary figures by A. Steinman and S. Hillels could very well be included with the articles of literary criticsm. The last section brings us various book reviews but one could have hoped for a more representative selection of works, particularly from *belles-lettres* and American Hebrew volumes.

The volume closes with the late Abraham J. Stybel's note in which this remarkable patron of Hebrew letters expressed the hope for the revival of Hebrew literature all over the world, with its center in Palestine. Even if his hopes for the future of Hebrew creativity in Poland and Russia seem over-optimistic, his own renewed activity during his last months helped to give impetus to Hebrew letters at least in this country.

Seter Hashanah, Volumes VIII-IX

The current *Sefer Hashanah*, volumes VIII-IX,, edited by Menachem Ribalow and published by the Histadruth Ivrith of America, represents a fairly well-balanced effort. While we might have wished for more studies on American themes and subjects, the section ol *belles-lettres* contains a number of contributions of specific American content. In this regard at least, the volume is becoming more of an *American* Hebrew year book. There is still need, however, for more Hebrew studies of the American Jewish scene.

Of the four stories, only J. Twersky's deals with subject matter not taken from American Jewish life—with a chapter of Hasidic history which he reconstructs with his usual dramatic ability. In his story of the adjustment of a young immigrant couple, S. L. Blank skirts the surface of American life but fails to penetrate to its depth. Benjamin Ressler, who has written mostly in Yiddish, describes the experience of a wounded returned soldier. The most realistic writing is to be found in Reuben Wallenrod's story, a chapter from his novel of American Jewish life *Ki Fanah Yom* (The Day Wanes), which has since appeared. In this chapter Wallenrod writes of the wait-

ers at Hotel Brookville in the "borsht circuit." This is one realistic phase of Jewish life as viewed against the background of a summer hotel.

The poetic contributions to the volume open with the concluding part of Zalman Schnaiur's "Hidden Tablets," which, in vivid biblical style, brings to life various "suppressed" chapters in the ancient history of our people. These poems, dealing with Molekh worship, the struggle of the prophets of Baal with Elijah and other themes, have a challenging power of their own. There is a representative selection of poems by American Hebrew poets which strikes a fair balance between universal and American subject matter and specific Jewish themes.

The *Sefer Hashanah* presents us with richer sections of articles and research and literary criticism than the bulkier *Hatekufah*. Jacob Klatzkin and Nissan Touroff write effectively in their respective fields of physics and psychology. The featured subjects this year are the Kabbalah and Jewish liturgy. Most stimulating among the studies on the Kabbalah is Jacob Agus' discussion of the Logic of the Kabbalah, in which he maintains that mysticism was not its motivating force. The Kabbalah was rather a religious philosophy which strove for a return to traditional Judaism and came as a reaction to philosophical speculation. The studies by Paltiel Birnbaum and Judah Rosenthal on the *siddur* and *mahzor* respectively offer various insights into the field of liturgy.

The section of literary criticism is well gotten together with essays on various authors in connection with their anniversaries. These include David Shimonowitz, Ephraim E. Lisitzky, Zalman Schnaiur, Uri Zevi Greenberg, Joseph Klausner and Joseph Hayyim Brenner. The last section, which contains various surveys as well as material on the American Jewish scene, is less rounded. There are but two articles which come to grips with American Jewish problems—Jacob Lestchinsky's survey of the economic scene and A. Hefterman's sketchy picture of life in the small-town Jewish community. In other respects, however, the current volume of the *Sefer Hashanah* measures up even better than the earlier ones.

Yiddish Poets of the "Third Destruction"*

By S. NIGER

THE tendencies characteristic of Yiddish poetry in the last few years, which will be touched upon in this article, have more to do with the motives, ideas, and thematic material of the new works than with their artistic form or style. This is not because they no longer are or strive to be works of art. On the contrary, if one excludes the Soviet Yiddish writers, it is fair to say that no representative of Yiddish literature today has attempted to make it solely an instrument of ideological expression. Ideas and a variety of psychological and ethical motives are for Yiddish literature as for any other, now as always, the raw material which requires expression in pictorial or lyric and rhythmic structure. This is understandable, but it is something that Yiddish writers have recently ceased to emphasize. This lack of emphasis is one of the most characteristic aspects of Yiddish literature today.

Insofar as Yiddish writers are con-

* Translated by Moshe Decter.

scientious—and they are—they no longer want to be reckoned with as artists, or "only" artists. It is as if they feel guilty that their people's, and their own, tragedy has become "a theme" for their poems or stories. The Midrash tells of how God spoke to the children of Israel after they had passed through the Red Sea and the Egyptians had been drowned in it, saying: "My creatures are drowning in the sea, and you sing a song of joy!?" The creatures who have "drowned" in recent years were not Egyptians, not enemy oppressors; they were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. . . .

For this reason, H. Leivik, the most sensitive poet of Jewish sorrow, who published a collection of poems bearing the characteristic title, *"I Was NOT in Treblinka,"* (New York, 1945) opened his book with these two lines:

אָ, ווער וועט אויף די סליאַדן פון טרעבלינקע־גאַנג
פאַרגעבן מיר די שולדן פון געזאַנג ?

"Oh, who on the steps of Treblinka's paths
Will forgive me the sins of song?"

Leivik is not the only Yiddish poet of our day who asks forgiveness for the "sins of song." All the other Yiddish poets do so as well. They all feel that what happened to their people should indeed force them "to hang up their harps on the willows" by the rivers of Poland or America. They all feel, with Aaron Zeitlin, who has mastered the art of expressing in modern terms, in Hebrew as well as in Yiddish, his deeply traditional mystic appreciation of the world, that "Were Jeremiah to sit by the ashes of Israel today, he would not cry out an *ekhah,* a Lamentation, nor would he drown the desolate places with his tears"; that "The Almighty Himself would be powerless to open up his well of tears"; that "With the lost millions of his people, He, too, would maintain a deep silence." "For even an outcry is now a lie, even tears are mere literature, even prayers are false." . . . But . . . poets, too, are only human, and if they cannot speak now, even less can they remain silent They cannot help themselves—they must unburden themselves of the weight that lies heavily on their souls; they must help us, their readers, soothe our pains through artistic sublimation.

And these are the two deepest emotions that stimulate the Yiddish poet of our day: the sense of the well nigh profaning impotence of the human word in expressing the super-human sorrows of our time, and, on the other hand, the urgent necessity of finding a word for that deep-seated muteness.

The fearful recognition of the weakness of human powers of expression in an age of overwhelming events — and the hope and endeavor to reveal hidden forces in human language—this paradox was found in Yiddish, as well as non-Yiddish, poetry also in the years following World War I, but under different circumstances and with different results. At that time it was manifest in the Yiddish poetry of liberated Poland, whereas today the center of Yiddish literature is in America. Today all that could reach us from Poland and Eastern Europe, in the beginning at least, is either embittered and perplexed Ghetto folklore or the tragic-heroic Resistance songs. What I have to say concerning the spirit of our new poetic creativity is pertinent particularly to America, which is the last surviving center of free and variegated Yiddish literary work. (There is a Yiddish literature, of course, also in the Soviet Union, but, unfortunately, it is bound by one-sided partisanship).

A second, more crucial difference is that after World War I the new sobriety and disillusionment of the

"Lost Generation" led to the ridicule of lyric poetry, and, as a first consequence to anti-poetic poetry, a sort of esthetic of anti-estheticism, then to a revolt against all the accepted rules of *ars poetica*—to a constant search for new forms or, more often, to a distortion of the old forms. Now, after *hurban Europa*, the destruction of European Jewry, one senses a revolt, not against any lyric poetry in general, but exclusively against writing poems on the theme of "Treblinka"—*when one has not been in Treblinka.* — As if it were possible to suffer vicariously the Jewish fate through artistic Jeremiads!

Literary men feel that these matters are too painful to be material for art. And in order to free themselves from this artistic, as well as purely human, doubt, they make this very doubt their subject matter. Thus almost every Yiddish poet who even mentions the gas chambers and the crematoria — and there is no poet who has the courage to avoid mentioning them — points up, in his writing, this contradiction: First, that this is indeed a time for silence and second, that silence at this time is impossible.

"Remember what Amalek has done unto you." — this is one of the reasons given for the impossibility of silence. We must write down and memorialize and immortalize what happened. We must brand it, like the sign of Cain, on the forehead of the collective murderer. Even more important — it is necessary that we ourselves and those who come after us remember what our people suffered in this terrible age.

Z. Segalovitch, one of the novelists and poets who fortunately managed to escape from Poland immediately after Hitler's invasion and who is now in Tel Aviv, expressed this sentiment clearly in one of his many poems:

וואָס איך פֿאַרלאַנג און קום אייך בעטן —
איר זאָלט ניט דורכגיין און פֿאַרמיידן — . . .
מען קאָן די מתים שוין נישט רעטן —
טאָ ראַטעוועט אַרויס דאָס ליידן.

אויף דורות־לאַנג זאָל עס פֿאַרבלייבן,
אויף אייבּיקקייטן צו דערציילן . . .
אויף פֿאַרמעט קריצן און באַשרייבן
דעם אונטערגאַנג פֿון אידיש־פֿאָלק.

"This is what I demand and implore of you—
Pass it not by nor avoid it. . . .
The dead can no longer be rescued—
Find at least an escape for their pain.

Let it abide for generations to come,
To be told for endless ages.
To be inscribed on enduring parchment—
The destruction of the Jewish people."

This deep need is uppermost in their minds—to memorialize, to unburden the heart, and, above all, to testify against the murderous enemy before the court of the world and future generations. A similar need led to the dedication of a large portion of our ancient literature to the Egyptian episode in our history. It filled the medieval chronicles and the entire Jewish literature of the Middle Ages with lamentations over the bloody edicts, expulsions and pogroms. And it culminated in our own day with Bialik's "City of Slaughter." This same deeply human and deeply Jewish-national need made of the Yiddish poets who themselves lived in the Ghetto and who could say with Jeremiah of old: "I am the man that hath seen affliction with the rod of His wrath," the chroniclers and the elegists of the Great Destruction.

The poets who were imprisoned in Hitler's ghettos and concentration camps, both those who perished with the rest of their people and those who escaped with their lives, sensed the natural need to cry out and to give voice to their muted anguish and anger. That this was so can

be clearly seen when one reads "The Song of the Slaughtered Jewish People," which was discovered after the martyrdom of the Hebrew-Yiddish poet, Isaac Katzenelson, the poet who had been driven from Lodz to the Warsaw Ghetto and from there to a French concentration camp and finally to a Nazi gas-chamber. The story of this rare manuscript, how it was written and preserved, shows us that *the men over there* were less able to remain silent than we here. Whoever had the least opportunity to do so, took his very life in his hands in order to cry out his pain with a pen, if not with his mouth. They had a burning desire to see to it that what they wrote down should be preserved, and so they sought every means to preserve it, writing on the walls of their *prisons,* when paper was not available. The martyr poet Katzenelson, whom we have mentioned, strove to find a large bottle in which to hide his writings, and succeeded with the help of his devoted friends. His "Song of the Slaughtered Jewish People" lives and will live although he, alas, is dead.

In this latter-day *ekhah,* our modern Jeremiah asks himself: "How can I sing? How can I even open my mouth, now that I am left all alone? My wife and my two children—O horror! I am stricken with horror! . . . Someone is crying. I hear weeping from a distance." Over and over again he asks himself—how can I sing? And over and over again he answers that he must sing, that he must lift his anguished and broken voice, that he must search for his dead "in every ash-pile, in every mound of earth." His dead are gone—he knows not where—and he begs them: 'Cry out from every plot of ground, from under every stone, from the dust cry out, from the flames, from the smoke. . . . It is your blood and flesh, it is your marrow and bone, it is your life . . . Cry out! Cry aloud! Cry out from the furnaces, cry, young and old. I want a world-shaking shriek, a cry of woe. I want to hear your voice. . . . Cry out! Slaughteerd Jewish people! Cry, cry, cry out!"

Do you remember the pogroms in the Ukraine after the first World War? During that dark period, which seems in retrospect so innocent, when the Ukrainian pogromists were approaching, the frightened and helpless Jews assembled in houses and synagogues, lifted up such a fearful din that could never be forgotten by those who heard it. This was not so much a cry for help as a yell that might throw fear into the hearts of the murderers. The yelling and the crying in those days had a purpose, but Katzenelson's had none. His was crying for the sake of crying. The poet wanted nothing more than to shout down the silence which was impossible to bear. He expected to hear no other voice than his own.

We here have been looking forward to seeing in print the chronicles that were miraculously saved. Not all the diaries, notebooks, or lyric outbursts that were written and preserved with so much self-sacrifice and devotion have as yet been printed. Those that were published by "Zukunft" and other organs of the Yiddish press in the last few years show that not only the thorns of superhuman suffering and subhuman "flowers of evil" flourished on the bloody field of Hitler's concentration camps and gas-chambers. On that field there also lived and suffered poetic talents of note. Aside from the scores of anonymous authors of poems, diaries, and plays there lived such men as Hirsch Gluck, the composer of the partisan hymn, "Say Not That This Is Your Last Road," which has now become a folk song; the martyr Binem Shayevitch, fragments of whose manuscripts have recently been published by the Jewish Historical Commission of

Poland. Among the partisans of the Vilna Ghetto and in the forests around Vilna, the talent of Abraham Sutzkever flourished. Sutzkever's collected poems entitled "The Fortress," his prose chronicle, "The Vilna Ghetto" and his other works will remain in Yiddish literature as the finest artistic human documents of our inhuman epoch.

It is not my purpose to devote too much space to individual works and authors. I have mentioned the names of several ghetto poets in order to point out that their main stimulus was the desire to find expression, and through that expression, a release from their too tragic experiences. Beside that, all of them, like Katzenelson, wanted to hear in the valley of death a cry—be it only their own cry of life. They wanted to hear it themselves, and they wanted those that would remain alive, and posterity, to hear and to remember the weeping and the final fright of the muted children, the screams and the vain, heaven-piercing shrieks of their fathers and mothers.

This desire made them the recorders and made the other Yiddish poets the elegists and the protagonists of justice of the "Third Destruction." Thus, with few exceptions, the entire Yiddish poetry in recent years is one grand Book of Lamentations, written by greater and lesser Jeremiahs.

Since all the poets have become authors of lamentations, it is only natural that the emphasis in their poetry should be not on its soothingly esthetic function but rather on its emotionally aroused and arousing social-ethical mission. Almost all of them ask, in modern terms, the old and eternally new question: What has happened to the conscience of the world? Where is God? Why is He silent? Almost all of them, even those who previously created "art for art's sake," are now infused with the spirit of the traditional Jewish ethos—and the atmosphere of Yiddish literature today, particularly the poetry, is, as of old, not that of a peaceful Temple of Art but that of a stormy court-house, in which the nations of the world, and God Himself, are being judged.

In spite of this, it is significant that a great part of this emotionally aroused poetry manifests a high degree of artistry. The purely formal techniques of the poem have not been neglected, notwithstanding the fact that the poet is so shaken and bewildered by ethical problems and religious doubts. The multitude of poetic works written by the most eminent American and European Yiddishists as a reaction to the horrible events in the ghettoes and camps stand frequently on a higher artistic level than their previous work.

In contradistinction to the poetic activities of the post-World War I years, the Yiddish poets today are no longer seeking new forms. They are satisfied to use the accepted methods and styles of poetic writing. (This includes the poets of the radical Experimentalist and Imagist schools). Purely artistic activities and experiments are far from anyone's mind today. Even Jacob Glatstein, the poet, short-story writer and critic, who was one of the founders of the Yiddish Imagist or Introspectionist school and who still indulges in literary experimentation, no longer concerns himself with purely artistic or formalistic achievements. The shadows and tragic lights of our people's fate, of our Kiddush HaShem, have encompassed large sections of his two new collections of poetry, "Gedenk Lider," (N. Y., 1943) and "Shtralendike Yiden," (N. Y., 1946). Problems of the people, the world, the devil or God, and not strictly personal experiences, stimulate his work.

With the exception of one or two individualistic lyric poets, the overwhelming number of Yiddish poets today have only

one theme in their work, the fate and tragedy of the Jewish people. Not only poets such as J. J. Schwartz, whose work has long been imbued with national motifs, and H. Leivik, in whose lyric and dramatic poetry there has always been an intimate relation between his personal fate and that of his people and the world, but also many other formerly individualistic poets (such as J. J. Siegel of Canada) have become primarily national poets. This does not mean that they declaim on the holiness or heroism of our people. They concern themselves and identify themselves with the life and sorrows of the people. Because of this their national poems contain the element of honesty and intimacy characteristic of personal poems. Like all of us, they are driven between fear and hope, despair and faith, impotent wrath and fighting courage. They see and depict for us the desolate remains of great Jewish communities, the ashes of tortured and cremated millions. But here and there one detects a ray of hope, in the words of the young poet Moshe Shulstein—

ס׳איז דאָ אין אַש אַ פונק, וואָס גייט נישט אויס.

"There is a spark in the ashes that does not die out."

The mission and the prevailing tendency of contemporary Yiddish poetry is—not to let that spark die out. Sutzkever, in "The Fortress," expressed it picturesquely in this way:

אַ וואַנט קעגן שרעק און אַ וואַנט קעגן טרויער
—און ס׳אייגענע לייב אין דער פעסטונג פאַרמויער.

"A wall against fear and a wall against sorrow
—And one's own body a wall in defense of the fortress."

A wall against fear and a wall against sorrow—this is what the Yiddish poetry of our day strives to be, even though, or perhaps because, it is the poetry of fear and of sorrow.

A Verity

By LILLIAN REŻNICK OTT

I look up into the sky
And I see no turmoil there—
Just silhouettes of barren trees
Who have gone to rest—
And I know 'tis they, not I,
Who know what's best.

I look into the earth
And I see no horror there—
Just roots and seeds
Preparing for another day—
And I know that theirs, not mine,
Is the better way.

I look out upon the world
And I see naught but havoc about
And though I search the mountains —
And I search the vales,
I find no gore-free sod—
And I realize then, vain mortal,
How far I'm from my God.

Jewish Books for Our Juveniles—A Bird's Eye View

By SARE G. LEVY

IN scanning the field of Jewish literature, one may be ther pleased and encouraged, or disapointed and disheartened. Perusing the elves upon shelves of secular literature hich beckon to our children and give em their standards, we feel impoverished at the sight of these treasures, and cry out to our Jewish writers, teachers, poets and artists, "Give us more of ur time and talents so that our boys d girls may be enriched in a Jewish y also!"

On the other hand, tracing back about enty-five years, and realizing how little table material was available at that e, our attitude becomes more hopeful in the observation that substantial ides have been made, and we cannot lp but feel that the future holds the omise of the development of a full and h literature.

cent Improvements in r Juvenile Literature

What a far cry it is from those days en our children imbibed much of their owledge from an adult point of view. day, the intense interest in child psyology has stimulated the writing of opropriate literature in both the secular d religious fields. Every year we are ting more and better books. We no ger choose a book with the idea of fitg a child to it. His own tastes and dencies determine our selection. He ows what he wants, and he chooses at he likes, and it is through this dium that our educators are trying bring the Jewish world to him. By awakening of a happy and interested tude toward books of Jewish content, y hope that he will gain an attachment and love for things Jewish, which will stay alive.

What a tremendous challenge to our editors and publishers! Today, they are not more discriminating in their selection of worthwhile texts, but in addition they must produce books which are artistic, beautifully printed and attractively bound. They know that the appearance and the title of a book are its bait. One has only to compare the first copy of Sadie Weilerstein's *What Danny Did,* which was originally published in the late twenties, with the 1947 edition of the same book to appreciate the progress which has been made.

Another advance may be noted with satisfaction. Illustrations are now playing an important part in Jewish juvenile literature. The finest artists are being employed and they too, like the writers, must have an understanding of the child's nature, and must possess a knowledge of his Jewish background. The artist is, after all, a "silent teacher."

Literature for the Pre-School Age Group

Let us first consider the literature of the pre-school child. What is available to this youngster who is getting his first impressions of Jewish life, whose interest span is short, whose imagination is fanciful, and who delights in play? We owe him a great deal, for his anxious eyes glisten as he hears stories and verses which are read or repeated to him. There is a dearth of material for this group. When *K'tonton* was first published by Sadie Weilerstein, it was an answer to a prayer. Teachers and mothers grasped it eagerly for it met the needs of their

children, who loved the little Jewish Tom Thumb and his breath-taking adventures. *K'tonton* will never grow old and has the well deserved distinction of being a classic in Jewish juvenile literature.

Our children are also indebted to Mrs. Weilerstein for her *What the Moon Brought,* which builds a story around the holidays and Sabbath, with Ruth and Debbie in the center of activities and preparations. In her latest book *Little New Angel,* the family life is continued with the addition of Michael, the adorable new baby who is responsible for the new and beautiful experiences which enter into their religious lives.

A new book from which our listeners are deriving much pleasure is Althea Silverman's *Habibi and Yow.* The precocious dog Yow, who is endowed with a Jewish conscience, goes through many appealing antics with his devoted master Habib.

Of benefit also is the attractive holiday series by Jane Bearman, which includes *Passover Party, Fun for Sukos,* and others, which are done in colorful picture book style with extra large print.

There are several excellent editions on the story of Noah's Ark, which give full play to the artist in the creation of brilliant and colorful animals. One which is especially enticing has been illustrated by Tiber Gergely, and written by Jane Werner.

For this age group we have the recently published *Mother Goose Rhymes for Jewish Children* by the writer. Using the bi-lingual method, it makes the approach to the holidays, ceremonies, Palestine and Hebrew. It presents, among others, rhymes which are variations of verses already familiar to the children. The book is well illustrated by Jesse Robinson.

Literature for the Seven to Nine Year Old Child

In discussing the seven to nine year olds, we find that these children also enjoy the literature of the younger group. Their interest comes from their ability to read the stories themselves. Who does not remember reading *Little Red Riding Hood,* perhaps a hundred times after kindergarten age, and always with the same thrill and suspense?

However, there is much additional material and a larger variety to choose from. We now want to bring them the book which is the great source of our strength and inspiration, the book which they must know and love, — the *Bible.* At a comparatively early age some of the stories may be read from the original text. The first introduction to the Bible is presented not as literature, but for the purpose of conveying moral truths. The child understands that Adam and Eve were punished because they disobeyed; that Noah and his family were saved because they were righteous, and so forth.

For the very young reader, care must be taken in giving him books which are very simple and easy to read. *Bible Tales for Young Children* by Lenore Cohen is suitable, and the stories are well-told.

Older children are able to appreciate *The Bible Story in Bible Words* by Jacob Schwartz. It is skillfully written, with Biblical phraseology wherever possible.

Elma Ehrlich Levinger, noted author of many delightful stories, has made a number of outstanding contributions to the Jewish juvenile. In her *Wonder Tales of Bible Days,* she has taken some of the rabbinic legends gathered from the Talmud and Midrash and has retold them in an interesting and readable style. Twenty-eight short stories based on the Bible are contained in her *Beautiful Garden.*

Related to the Bible is a series of stories

which are based on Jewish folklore. Joesph Gaer in *The Burning Bush,* retells some of the beautiful tales which have been handed down since the beginning of our existence. He tells them in beautiful prose, which merits constant re-reading.

Strange as it may seem, we, who are the creators of the Bible, find ourselves coming to non-Jewish sources for additional material. *David* by Elizabeth Ornton Jones is done in fine delicate tones, and gives a splendid insight into the beloved character of David.

Exquisitely illustrated and popular are the Petersham books, *Moses, David, Joseph* and *Ruth.*

One cannot pass over *The Complete Old Testament Edition* by Gaines. Noting the tenacity and seriousness with which our young readers cling to comic books, this author makes use of the same technique in producing Bible stories. With the same type, color and quality of paper, he presents the patriarchs, prophets and all the great heroes of the Bible. In spite of its style, the book is recommended because it preserves the spirit of reverence, and because it reaches some children who would not be reached otherwise.

Skipping momentarily to the adolescent, and in connection with the study of the Bible, we mention Mortimer Cohen's very important book, *Pathways Through The Bible.* He gives basic information and interpretations which guide the student in his understanding and appreciation of our greatest book. Our young people are indeed fortunate in having this outstanding piece of work available to them.

Treating of holiday ceremonies and customs, Mamie Gamoran, in her *Days and Ways* includes fundamental Hebraic terms and blessings, and succeeds in enriching the experiences which the children have had in their homes. Holiday customs and practices are described by the same author in a series of stories contained in *Hillel's Happy Holidays.*. Religious school teachers are grateful for the help which these books have given them.

Books on Jewish history are for the most part integrated in the curricula of the religious schools. Rose Lurie in *The Great March* acquaints the children with some of the great personalities whose lives are interwoven with historical facts. She introduces them to Rabbi Akiba, Ibn Gabirol, Hillel and many others.

Books for Older Children

As the children grow older they read the Soloff books, *When the Jewish People Was Young, When the Jewish People Grew Up,* and *How the Jewish People Lives Today.* These are easy to read and easy to follow.

Additional writings are Jacob Golub's *In the Days of the First Temple, In the Days of the Second Temple.*

In considering historical literature, we must include some of the works of Abraham Burstein. Employing original and attractive plots, he has based five juvenile novels upon great Jews in history, and the periods in which they lived. His texts are full of interesting data. *The Boy of Cordova* brings a picture of young Maimonides escaping from Cordova during a fanatical attack upon Jews. In *The Boy Called Rashi,* he portrays the early youth of that great commentator. *Judah Halevi in Granada* depicts the romantic incidents in the life of this genius at the age of sixteen. A number of Halevi's poems appear in this story. Another in the series entitled *The Boy of Vilna* tells of some interesting youthful adventures in the life of the Vilna Gaon. In his fifth novel *West of the Nile,* Saadyah Gaon and the circum-

stances of the days in which he lived are brought to our boys and girls.

The modern upbuilding of Palestine has given rise to an important addition to children's literature. One of the older books *Adventuring in Palestine,* by Marion Rubinstein, is distinctive for the photographic illustrations taken by the author. These make the early pioneering days a closer reality.

Another book, and coincidentally of similar title, has just come off the press. *Adventure in Palestine,* by Judith Ish-Kishor is a story of present day Palestine which looks to the future. This dramatic tale with its wealth of first hand information, demonstrates how Jew and Arab can live happily together.

In Libbie Braverman' *Children of the Emek,* Nahalal becomes the setting for the delightful experiences of the nine-year-old twins, Tamar and David. With them our children bathe in the Dead Sea, celebrate Purim in Tel Aviv, and make many exploratory trips.

The Strange Adventures of Danny Noor, by the Palestinian Shelomo Ben Israel has been translated from the Hebrew by Dov Ben Abba. Danny Noor has the craving to see the world, and he leaves Palestine as a stowaway. He travels to foreign shores, and reaches South Africa, where he finds a remnant of the ten tribes in a Falasha village. The story moves rapidly in good boy fashion.

Rebuilding Palestine, by Ben Edidin gives the children the background of the Zionist movement, with its personalities, objectives, problems and development.

The Story of Modern Palestine, by Dorothy Zeligs, is done in text book style, with emphasis upon the colonies, the chalutzim, the manufactures, a history of Zionism and its leaders.

Elma E. Levinger also has a book of stories dealing with present-day Jewish life in Palestine. It is her *Pilgrims to Palestine.*

Some Biographies for Children

In the classification of biography, Elma E. Levinger has given us *Great Jewish Women,* in which we find short sketches of ancient and modern women beginning with Sarah, Rachel, Leah, Rebecca and on to Rebecca Gratz, Emma Lazarus, Clara De Hirsch, Sarah Chizick and the many others. Her *Great Jews Since Bible Times* is another valuable biographical collection.

Deborah Pessin, one of our newer writers, has made several excellent contributions to our juvenile book shelf. *Giants on the Earth* tells of the real giants of our people who have lived since the discovery of America. She precedes each story with a short biography which is very helpful in bringing the lives of such luminaries as Disraeli, Judah Touro, Trumpeldor, and Nathan Strauss within the understading of her young readers. Under the miscellaneous heading in juvenile literature, she has brought both pleasure and information to our children in *Michael Turns the Glove.* It acquaints them with other Jewish boys and girls in different parts of the world,—in Mexico, Ethiopia, Spain, India, Arabia and China. In her *Aleph Bet Story Book,* clever personification has been attributed to the Hebrew alphabet letters, with their stories built around Biblical people and events.

The worn pages and tell-tale thumb prints of two books bespeak their popularity. They are Gerald Friedland's, *Jewish Fairy Book,* which contains a fascinating collection of stories taken from ancient writings placed in modern settings, and *Tales from Grandfather's Big Book,* by Calish. The latter, also, is a series of

Jewish legends, retold in a satisfying and compelling style.

In *Yossele's Holiday and the Brave Maccabees,* by Sonia Mazur, grandfather plays his part again as a story teller. The unique illustrations, which lend the old Polish Jewish atmosphere, give the book a color of its own.

With stirring and timely plots, Oscar Leonard has produced *Americans All.* Here in a series of stories the hero, Benny, learns how the Jews helped in the discovery and growth of America, and how they have played vital roles in every worthwhile endeavor which has made this country great.

Haym Solomon, Son of Liberty, by Howard Fast, is a remarkably accurate portrayal of the early days of American history, when Haym Solomon came forward as a loyal Jewish patriot. It is based on careful research and is historically accurate. The illustrations of the 18th century period are noteworthy.

Some Miscellaneous Contributions

Breakfast of the Birds, by Judah Steinberg, is one of the old books which is counted in juvenile literature as "timeless." Translated from the Hebrew by Emily Solis-Cohen, truths of life are beautifully conveyed by allegory and appeal to the lighter imagination.

The immortal Bialik's *Far Over the Sea,* is another children's treasure which has been translated from the Hebrew. This great and overpowering genius who has stirred our very souls in his *City of Slaughter,* and *Ha-Matmid,* sees the world from the eyes of a little child and writes about dollies, toys, holidays and trips. *Far Over the Sea* was translated by the late Jessie Sampter, who wrote many things for children. It is a beautiful book and must be seen to be appreciated.

One God, written by Florence Mary Fitch, enables the adolescent to broaden his viewpoint, and makes him more tolerant. With photographs, it emphasizes the practices of the three great religions of America—Jewish, Protestant and Catholic. Without a doubt, it answers many questions in the young mind.

As our list grows, we applaud such alluring titles as *Spice and the Devil's Cave,* by Agnes Hewes, *Joey Meets His People,* by Kruchman, *The Fire Eater,* by Henry Berkowitz, *Cavern of Destiny,* by Ben Aronin, *Nightingale Song* and *Happiness for Sale,* by Dorothy Alofsin. Space here permits only the mention of these. We hope that along with the thrills of mystery, romance and adventure, our adolescents will find something which will strike a resonant chord in their Jewish hearts.

We shower our thanks and blessings upon Solomon Simon for the refreshing and riotous humor in *The Wise Men of Helm,* and *The Wandering Beggar.* Let us pray for more writers who will make our boys and girls laugh to offset all that they read and hear about persecution and hatred. Let us pray for good inspiration among all the gifted ones, who by their talents aim to teach and impress those who are the greatest hope of Israel—our children.

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The Shema

By JUDAH GOLDIN

WHEN you have said that the Shema is the central prayer of the Jewish service, or that it is the Jew's confession of faith, you have still failed to reveal anything more than its historic importance. It is satisfying to be told that already in the earliest public service these words were read, that at his martyrdom Rabbi Akiba found in them the appropriate exclamation of his life. Yet even for the Jew there are times when the folk way may not be the individual's way unless he finds it intrinsically compelling. Then he does not revolt against the tradition; he tries to understand it. He does not say "The Temple ritual was primitive," or, "What Akiba said is interesting but irrelevant to me." Instead he asks, "What made the Shema so fitting for the Temple worshippers, why did the paragraph come to Akiba's mind?" The moment the Jew asks these questions he is on his own and he turns from narrative to an examination of the experience itself, from history to the text of the Shema. It is then that he discovers that the Shema is more than a prayer and more than a confession. It is an outcry of his wounded innermost being. For that outcry there is no vocabulary, no adequate words—other than those of the Shema. Let the psychologists say what they will, man knows there are times when he is so overcome by some experience, some silence, some mood, that he must cry out, and for that cry no available words or sentences exist and all coherence falters. These are the occasions when he discovers that every dictionary is abridged, every concordance, every thesaurus incomplete. Then only the Shema comes to his rescue.

But why the Shema, you insist?

Because it says precisely what we all know and dare not admit, even to ourselves most of the time. It declares that the minimum service of God must be a maximum love. As the very beginning of piety we need to love Him witht all our heart, with all our soul, with all our being; His words we need to inscribe in our hearts, teach our children, speak of at home, on the highway, lying down, rising maximum love. As the very beginning of piety we need to love Him with all our never let His words cease from our lips, and out of sight. Knowing what we are we know we shall fail to do so; and knowing what He is we know how formidable is the failure. In frustration and anguish therefore we cry out. And nothing we invent so well expresses our realization of what is involved as the Shema itself.

Some Comments on the United Synagogue's Music Conference

By CHEMJO VINAVER

I

EVER since my arrival in America, ten years ago, I have hoped that some responsible institution would undertake a serious consideration of the problems of synagogue music in this country. It was, therefore, with anticipation and hopefulness that I attended the Music Conference called by the Music Department of the United Synagogue of America. The conference, held in February, was devoted almost exclusively to this very problem.

Of particular interest were the addresses of Rabbi Ira Eisenstein and Mr. Max Helfman, addresses which touched the very core of the complex of problems concerning synagogue music. Rabbi Eisenstein, in his address, maintained that congregations need more than merely a modernized version of the traditional cantor and that it is necessary for the cantor also to be a "musical personality." It would seem, from Rabbi Eisenstein's words, that the "musical personality" is of more importance, perhaps, than the *hazanut*. Just as the rabbi's duties are not over after preaching the Sabbath sermon, but extend rather to every aspect of the spiritual life of his congregation throughout the week, so the cantor must participate in the musical activities of the congregation during the week, and not remain content with chanting the Sabbath service. The cantor's main activities should be during the week, teaching appropriate music to bar mitzvah boys, directing the singing of members of the congregation and singing with them, for pleasure rather than in the interest of higher artistic standards.

It is my conviction that the type of "musical personality" that Rabbi Eisenstein imagines to be the ideal for American Jews will not be equipped in the least to improve either the standards of cantors or of synagogue music generally. On the contrary, I fear that such a "musical personality" may even contribute to the further deterioration of the present deplorable situation, for he will likely be neither hazan nor a real musical personality. Our sages have wisely said: *"Tafasta merubbah lo tafasta"* — too much undertaken is nothing gained. The present dearth of hazanim should not lead us to conclude that the cantors should primarily be "musical personalities," nor should an ideal principle be made of this conclusion.

No less sincere than Dr. Eisenstein are we who oppose his views and maintain that the only solution is for the cantor to be only a hazan, no more and no less than just a hazan. The hazan's field must be, just as in the European Jewish communities of old, *avodat hakodesh*—holy worship. The hazan must cease to be a teacher of bar mitzvah boys, let alone a businessman, as is often the case, to our great misfortune. The hazan has before him a monumental task — to know *hazanut,* to know synagogue music and melody, to be a *baal tefilah*. If he fulfills this task, he has done more than enough. The hazan's function is to inspire the worshipers, and not to cater to more popular, vulgar standards.

I am fully aware of the sad conditions presently obtaining in American synagogue music, and I know too that we no longer have the old-time hazan. But I

must insist that such compromises, made in line with *apparent* necessity, will achieve the very opposite of our desired results. Our approach to Jewish cultural problems must be of the highest standard without c o m p r o m i s e. Only through such an approach may we be enabled to combat ignorance and vulgarity.

Our unfortunate mistake has been that we have, gradually and systematically, given up our high standards of quality, persuading ourselves meanwhile that thereby we are maintaining firmly what little Jewishness is still left to us. Concessions, appeasement, the surrender of high standards, all because of "the emergency situation," have led us to our present circumstances. Today one can barely count on the fingers of one hand the cantors who still know "*nusah.*" The "musical personality" will, in no one's estimation, be a hazan of this sort. Our task must be to preserve by all means the traditional *nusah* and chant of the synagogue.

A step in this direction would be the establishment of a School for Cantors where young hazanim would learn the traditional chant and melody of the synagogue thoroughly. Such an institution might, if we are fortunate, help to bring back the "voice of Jacob" into the synagogue. It could contribute to raising the synagogue to the position it once held, so that it might be truly worthy of the name, *kehillah kedoshah*—holy congregation.

Only through an intensification of our spiritual and cultural tradition can the survival of our people be assured.

II

Mr. Max Helfman's address on "What Type of Music Should Be Sung in the Synagogue?" merits detailed attention. I do not hesitate to assert that were our synagogue music to be directed and created as indicated by Mr. Helfman, we should lose what little is left to us of our traditional *nusah.* Mr. Helfman opened his address by launching an attack on Naumburg and Lewandowski, the two West-European musicians who exerted such a great influence on synagogue music in the 19th century. Mr. Helfman is undoubtedly not alone in his dislike of Lewandowski; but it was shocking indeed to hear his misinterpretation of a Lewandowski *Lekhah Dodi,* in order to discredit him. This inappropriate tactic may have gained the speaker applause, but it certainly proved nothing about Lewandowski.

It might be pointed out that the two melodies by Bloch and Diamond, which Helfman sang with so much pathos—in order to show the audience how profoundly mystical they are in contradistinction to the Lewandowski melodies—could just as easily be presented in a banal manner. Such a misinterpretation would have had the same comical effect as did the cruel joke perpetrated on the Lewandowski melody. As a musician, Helfman should know the significance of *interpretation* in presenting music. He is no doubt aware of the fact that the slightest change in the dynamics of a composition is enough to give it an entirely different meaning. Notwithstanding this, Helfman, in singing the Lewandowski piece, changed not only its dynamics but also its rhythm, displaying throughout an unexpected talent at parody. I was sorry that it did not occur to one of the cantors to stand up and sing one of the many fine Lewandowski prayers, simply and without tricky changes, as a challenge to the speaker's charge that Lewandowski was a poor musician.

It is unforgivable to present Lewandowski in this light, to under-rate his worth as a musician, and particularly as

a Jewish musician. As long as Jews will have synagogues, Lewandowski's first-rate compositions, such as his *Ki KeShimecha,* will be sung there. He composed music for the Psalms that is on as high a musical level as those compositions which Helfman championed. And even that poor *LeKhah Dodi,* which was almost done to death by Helfman's misinterpretation, contains a section for choir that leaves no doubt concerning Lewandowski's musical ability.

True, Lewandowski's influence must be combated. But Mr. Helfman is apparently ignorant of the true nature of Lewandowski's baleful influence on synagogue music, and thus misdirected his fire. One must look for Lewandowski's errors in an entirely different area. For example, Lewandowski took a melody with a thoroughly Jewish-Oriental motif, such as *Ashre HaAam Yode'e Teruah,* which is sung by the cantor on the High Holy Days, cut it to pieces and made a march of it. Lewandowski, the assimilationist, did not want the Jews of Germany, in the midst of West-European culture, to sing melodies with old-Asiatic motifs. In similar fashion, he crippled the *Kedushah* that is sung at Neilah on Yom Kippur. One can point to many such musical sins committed by Lewandowski. Therein, and nowhere else, lies his harmful influence on synagogue music. *In the same sense, it can be said that* 95 *percent of the compositions advocated by Mr. Helfman are Jewish neither in their motif nor in their structure and have no place in the synagogue.*

Mr. Helfman's appearance with his choral group, the evening of the Conference, was intended to be a practical demonstration of the words he had spoken previously. He attempted to prove there his contention that we must draw new inspiration from the outside, we must move along with the times, and we must introduce new themes into the synagogue. (It is interesting, in this connection, to note that Lewandowski, whom Helfman attacked so vehemently, followed exactly those principles enunciated by Helfman.)

I do not care at this time to comment on the quality of the compositions presented by the Helfman choir. I should like, however, to take issue with his thesis. Helfman pointed out, correctly enough, that the synagogue is not a distinctly separate and independent institution but is rather an integral part of the daily life of Jews. This true observation was distorted, however, in order to substantiate the principle that synagogue music should be influenced by new trends from non-Jewish, every-day sources outside the synagogue. The very opposite was true traditionally. Just because the synagogue was such an intimate part of the daily life of Jews, they did not bring every-day music into the synagogue but rather brought synagogue melodies into their every-day life—so that one could always hear Jews, tailor and shoemaker as well as scholar and business man, humming melodious synagogue chants while at work. The synagogue was never invaded from the outside, as Helfman would recommend today.

Towards the end of his address, Helfman made a startling statement that caused me to think that he had suddenly changed his tune and adopted a new philosophy. He suggested that the cantors visit the old Orthodox synagogues on the East Side of New York to hear how they chant their prayers! Any misapprehensions on this score were soon dissipated, however, upon the disclosure of the peculiar reasoning behind this suggestion. In the old East Side synagogues, it was declared, the cantors would hear interesting new harmonies and modern polyphony. (Incidentally, *modern* polyphony is an unfortunate choice of expression,

for, since Bach, polyphony has been little modernized.) This new harmony and modern polyphony arise, the audience was informed, from the fact that each Jew begins his chanting at a different time, each in a different key. I fear that such a journey to the East Side would turn out to be quite fruitless, for the cantors would discover there not what Helfman said is there, but something totally different—traditional *nusah* that pious Jews, at least, have not completely forgotten. Modern harmony, I propose, can best be learned rather in the Schoenberg compendium of harmony (*"Harmonielehre"*).

No less than Mr. Helfman am I an advocate of modern music for the synagogue. But I cannot stress too much or too often my contention that such modern music must have its roots within the synagogue, not outside it. There is, for example, such a thing as *mesorah nusah*, a *nusah* that has been transmitted from generation to generation during countless ages. This *nusah* should in some way be utilized in the creation of new, modern synagogue music. Even in the works of Milhaud one can frequently detect old Sephardic modes from the Provence; and much of Bloch's music has its roots in the Jewish *melos*.

Modern music in the synagogue? Of course! But we must be extremely careful not to inject into our new synagogue music motifs and modes and themes that are foreign to it. Mr. Helfman is not the first to err in this regard. Many old-time East-European cantors and musicians have introduced strange, non-Jewish march and dance melodies into the synagogue; with the result that one is frequently appalled when one enters an Orthodox synagogue and hears what sacrilege is being perpetrated upon Jewish music by the cantor and choir. Synagogue music must not be sacrificed on the altar of "Holy Modernism"! Modern synagogue music must draw its inspiration from traditional music! Instead of introducing foreign elements into it, we should, on the contrary, re-emphasize our traditional *nusah*. Only then will our modern Jewish composers be able to create new synagogue music, be it with the most refined counter-point and the most dissonant harmonies. But the sources will be Jewish.

A case in point is Ravel, certainly an eminent contemporary, who composed, or better, arranged for solo and organ, the traditional Kaddish chanted on Rosh HaShanah. Ravel, the non-Jew, was a great musician and felt immediately the dramatic power of the old Jewish Kaddish so that he added nothing extraneous to it in his composition. Our modern Jewish composers would do well to study his example.

[I agree with Mr. Vinaver that the ideal situation would be to permit the hazan to specialize in *hazanut*. There is certainly plenty to do, to perfect one's musical education, to search out new compositions, to keep one's musical skills at their maximum. In a congregation of considerable size, a hazan of this kind could be maintained, in addition to the musical personality whom I regard as indispensable.

Unfortunately, however, there are hundreds of synagogues throughout the United States which are not in a position to maintain two full time people. And my point was simply this: If there is a choice between a hazan with the beautiful voice, and with nothing else, on the one hand, and a musical personality on the other hand, I would prefer the latter. There is no basic difference of opinion between Mr. Vinaver and me. —*Ira Eisenstein*]

New Currents in Modern Synagogue Music

AN ANSWER TO MR. VINAVER

By MAX HELFMAN

OPENING a window in a crowded and stuffy room is almost always bound to raise a storm of violent protest from among those who are congenitally allergic to "drafts" of fresh air. My modest attempts in the brief talk before the Music Conference of the United Synagogue to let a little fresh air circulate in the rather musty musical atmosphere—while received with unusual warmth by the Conference — seems to have caused some severe "head-colds" among a few of our musical intelligentsia.

That Mr. Vinaver should be among these casualties, I can only attribute to the fact that he misunderstood the contents even as he seems to have misread the very title—and hence the scope—of my address. I did *not* speak on so general and all-inclusive a topic as "What Type of Music Should Be Sung in the Synagogue?" As a practicing musician in the synagogue for many years, I need hardly be informed as to the place and role of our classics in our liturgic repertory. The classical and the traditional must obviously form the foundation and constitute the bulk of our musical service. The subject of my talk was a much more limiting one: "The Cantor As Leader in Jewish Musical *Progress*" — with the accent on *progress*. My remarks were therefore confined to the question: *After* the classics—what? Or, in other words, Where do we go from here?

In the limited space so graciously alloted me, I can hardly hope to correct all of Mr. Vinaver's misconceptions. I can only allude to a few of his specific animadversions. In general, I must say that Mr. Vinaver displays a remarkable gift for putting the axiomatic in terms of the controversial. Let us take the question of *nusah* for example. Presenting himself as the champion of *nusah* he somehow imputes to me a non-existent antagonism to it. *Nusah* is, of course, a *sine qua non* as a basis for synagogual composition. The problem at issue is what to do with it—how to treat it anew and creatively. As I said in my talk: "*The question is really not one of the new music versus the old. The problem, as I see it, is the need for the re-interpretation of the old in terms of the new.* If life can be looked upon as some sort of cosmic theme and variations, I hold it necessary and obligatory for each generation to create *its own variation* on the *fundamental theme.* . . .

"We cannot continue exclusively to live on the interest of our past achievements. The progress of an art, as of life, cannot be halted by the vague cry of 'tradition'. Even assuming that we know the precise definition of this shibboleth, it is certainly true that a *living tradition* is a *growing* tradition, constantly added to and modified by changing environment.

"A Rossi with his courtly Italian madrigalism, a Naumbourg with his French-like clarity and tuneful naivete, a Lewandowski with his *burgerliche,* colorless Germanic conventionalities, a Zeidel Rowner, with his crass, brass-band Slavonic harmonizations—didn't they express their *'sviva'*? Shall we of this age do less?"

"The miraculous truth is that many of our contemporary masters have an infinitely closer affinity to and profounder insight into the heart of our traditions than many of the accepted classics of our past. It is really only by applying the im-

aginative resources and free techniques of modern composition that the subtle nuances and unique characteristics of our music can finally reach their *'tikun'."*

Mr. Vinaver seems to find a contradiction in my advocacy of a rapprochement between the modern composer and the old, orthodox "school." There is no contradiction here whatsoever. It is a simple truism that the modern artist has a close perceptive and sympathetic bond with the "primitif"—the "primitif" which the 19th century artist could so rarely appreciate and therefore constantly sought to "academize" and "civilize" and ended by merely emasculating its essential spirit. Let me quote from my talk: "When we visit one of those last repositories of this wonderful unique musical spirit of ours—the little side-street 'shool' where Jews do not pray in unison, but really "davan" (each one seeking to settle his private account with God in his own way), the sensitive ear is struck by the haunting beauty of the strange harmonic hum that fills it, the polyphonic interplay of one 'davener' with the other, the polytonality of the 'kohanim' when they 'duchen', the utter freedom from all superimposed rythmical and melodic straight-jackets. Here then, in this little, old "shool" is practically the whole arsenal of the modern composer; unorthodox harmonies, polytonalities, polyrythms—the whole gamut of new, expressive possibilities. Brought closer to our sources, the modern composer would here be like a fish in water. He, better than any of his predecessors, could crystallize that vague hum. that musical life of our synagogue, could give it permanent artistic shape and thus not only enrich himself, but all of our people."

Mr. Vinaver seems to have taken particular offense at my *interpretation* of some of the melodies from Lewandowski and Sulzer. However justified he may be, I must insist that no amount of "pious" and "pilpulistic" interpretation could possibly disclose any particularly Jewish quality in the melodies I quoted or in hundreds more I could have added. And if I exaggerated somewhat their conventional banalities, it was only as a reaction towards the cynical shoulder-shrugging, "pooh-poohing," obstructive attitude that too many of our musicians (who should know better) have consistently maintained towards the serious and vital efforts of recent years to enrich our synagogue music and move it forward. All I pleaded for in my talk was "to listen with an open ear and an open heart."

Is this too much to ask?

The synagoue is perhaps the only remaining platform where the modern Jewish composer can effectively and continuously meet his people to vitalize them and be in turn revitalized by them. I quote: "Not perhaps since the days of Jubal have we had such a concentration of musical creative forces as we now have in this land. From the veteran masters Arnold Schoenberg and Ernest Bloch to the versatile, genial young men like Bernstein and Lukas Foss, we have tremendous untapped resources, but we must remember that no creative artist can work in a vacuum. He must have a platform, he must have a sounding board in a warm and enlightened audience.

"To help fill this vacuum, to help create this warm and enlightened audience—this, as I see it, is the task of the modern cantor in his role as a leader in Jewish musical progress. He must serve as a bridge betwen the creative artists and the people. Certainly it is hard to serve as a bridge and carry the burden of such exalted traffic, but it is a noble and needful task. The cantor must cease to be regarded as some sort of talented hired help that merely follows instructions of

oard and rabbi as to what to do and hat not to do. Nor must he let himself e regarded as a frustrated concert artist ngaged to entertain his congregation ith pleasant song. He must be regarded, nd first of all, he must learn to so re-ard himself, as a teacher and guide in ne field of our music. To achieve this ature, he must, of course, continuously roaden his musical and cultural horizons. rom Shestapol to Stravinsky, all impor-nt choral works should arouse sympathetic interest. *He must make of his synagogue, not only a repository of the finest of our traditions, a truly but sacred laboratory.*"

As a final word, may I say to those "leaders of Jewish music" who seem to have rather delicate musical constitutions: "Gentlemen, put up your collars or step aside! The drafts you feel so keenly are the new winds blowing in the field of Jewish music. May they long continue to blow!"

The Homeless

By HELEN DAVERT

To tell you that your home
lies bedded in the heart—
much like the trees, their lingering fragrance
and the promising earth cradled your house—
would give you less than truth.

It would be asking him
who weeps, to smile.

The walls you touched, were married
to the daintiest mood encompassed,
just as beloved lips
are portion to an ecstasy.

Home is the door, the table bearing bounty,
or masking poverty with cup and cloth.
It is the lamp that lights a face.
Home is the sweet flesh
of a baby's neck.
It is the bed where curls a foreign warmth.
Home is a kiss.

Include the breath and echo of these things.

All other wisdom is a dream
that passes with the dreamer.

Random Thoughts

THE basic fallacy underlying present-day education is that one is born human, whereas the fact is that one has to be trained or educated to be human.

A time will come when we shall finally rid ourselves of that fallacy.

Then high schools, colleges and universities will provide courses in their curricula in subjects like self-mastery, honesty, reliability, generosity, mercy, courage, contentment, friendship, freedom from hate and prejudice, a wise sense of values, etc. They may have to reduce the requirements in higher mathematics and in ancient history.

To get a degree, it will be more important to get a passing mark in the art of being human than in making a high grade in the humanities.

Until such time all our schools of secondary and higher learning will continue to be organized as "academic filling stations," giving our young people enough "gas" to drive themselves wherever they want at break-neck speed.

* * *

"We already know so much that it is dangerous not to know more," recently said Dr. I. I. Rabi, the famous physicist.

To which we would add, "and it is even more dangerous not to be wise, for wisdom is the art of human fellowship."

* * *

Being wise often requires overcoming the handicap of being learned, for it is difficult for the learned to realize that life is never like what the books describe it, nor can it ever be like what the books say it ought to be.

* * *

Philip Wylie in discussing "Subjective Feudalism" makes the following comment which every June with its commencement ceremonials proves to be true:

"The professors and students in their black robes, under their flat, black mortarboard hats, keep visibly alive even among the so-called enlightened classes both the specter and the spirit of the ages of darkness against which, presumably, education above all should struggle."

* * *

We shall hail with rejoicing that June day when rabbinical colleges and seminaries will have the courage to dispense at their graduation exercises with the medieval garb which was worn by the university students in the capacity of church clerics, and which caused the hearts of our forebears to palpitate with fear every time these students invaded the ghetto streets.

* * *

A noted educator recently described the courses given in philosophy and theology both in universities and in seminaries as dealing with people we never heard of offering solutions that we cannot understand for problems that never bothered us.

* * *

A platitude is a truth not geared to anything in particular.

* * *

A colleague of ours is a rabbi who does not merely preach social justice but regards it his duty to put it into operation in some of the industries of his city.

In his efforts at arbitrating in industrial

disputes he stresses the equality of all classes and races.

On one of his train trips the Negro porter of his car recognized him, and soon apprised the steward of the diner, also a Negro, of his presence. Both men paid the rabbi homage for what he had done for their people.

"I saw no reason for acting otherwise. We are all God's children," said the rabbi.

"That's what I have always believed," replied the Negro steward, "and to prove it to you let me show you something."

At this he drew out from his pocket a receipt for a contribution to the "United Yeshivot Fund."

* * *

The fact that illiteracy is a curse does not mean that literacy is necessarily a blessing.

* * *

Societies are more like one another in their characteristics and behavior than are individuals.

Hence discrimination between one people and another is even more absurd and irrational than between one individual and another.

M. M. K.

Book Notes

SERVE GOD WITH INTELLIGENCE

PROBLEMS OF MEN. By John Dewey. New York: Philosophical Library. 1946. 424 *pp.* $5.

ONLY the twenty-page introduction was written expressly for this volume. The other essays are reprinted from periodicals, and were written in the period from 1935 to 1945 (except one essay that was written fifty years ago). The book is divided into parts dealing with democracy and education, human nature and scholarship, value and thought, and a final section about thinkers (James Marsh, William James, and Whitehead). While the book as a whole presents no new aspect of Dewey's thought, some of the essays serve to clarify his position on various philosophical and social matters and are valuable for this reason.

Dewey's philosophy does not tolerate a distinction between knowledge of Being and knowledge of things; for all knowledge is of the temporal, the contingent; there is no knowledge of a reality which is inherently eternal and necessary and is the foundation of the knowledge of things in flux. Nor does philosophy mean to Dewey knowledge of pure theory; philosophy is wisdom of life, knowledge relevant to the intelligent conduct of the affairs of men.

Dewey would not, I think, approve of the Federal government spending millions of dollars on research in the natural sciences without consideration of the impact of the fruits of this research on social relations; for society cannot afford to neglect the vital problem of the actual and potential consequences of the results of scientific research. Furthermore, he would pose the question: Why should not the scientific method be applied to a study of those social institutions through which the scientific method becomes effective in the lives of men?

In an article in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* Raymond Fosdick sharply and correctly criticized Congress for limiting the research program to the natural sciences; and he at the same time criticized the social scientists for not attempting, with sufficient vigor, to point out to the legislators the full implications of the position the government was taking. Dewey would approve Fosdick's criticism. "Under present conditions," says Dewey, "scientific methods take effect in determining the concrete economic conditions under which the mass of men live. But they are not employed to determine freely and systematically the moral, humane ends served by engrossing practical conditions, the actual state of ends and values. Hence the more important things are left to decision by custom, prejudice, class interests, and traditions embodied in institutions, whose results are mostly fixed by the superior power in possession of those who manage them."

Among the chief opponents to the scientific study of social institutions—a study to be prosecuted with the same vigor and with the same measure of financial and "moral" support, from public and private sources, as that enjoyed by the study of the natural sciences (especially studies that have some relevance to the strengthening of the war potential of the country)—are those whose chief objective is the promotion of one brand or another of supernatural theology. These persons do not believe that wisdom in the ways of life, in the articulation of ends and values, can come from a scientific search for truth or reality. Why search for truth and reality among the facts of nature when Truth and Reality are to be found only in a supernatural sphere—among the choir of heaven, and not among the furniture of earth?

Dewey points out that having faith in the scientific method does not mean being blind to the fact that science is still in its babyhood. For scientific method of inquiry has not yet begun to reach maturity. It will achieve manhood "only when its use is extended to cover all aspects of all matters of human concern."

But to Dewey an emphasis on scientific method does not by any means spell out a claim that the moral aspect of events or problems is irrelevant to that method. On the contrary, Dewey continually emphasizes the point that economic, commercial and social affairs may not be isolated from the political and the moral. The notion that there are ends-in-themselves as distinguished from ends that are called "mere means" is an obstruction to thought and to social progress. This distinction, and that between "higher" and "lower" forms of knowledge stand in the way of the "humane and liberal office" science has to perform.

It seems to me (and I can say this only in passing, without attempting to prove the proposition) that the position of Dewey should be illuminating and congenial to readers of *The Reconstructionist*, to whom Judaism is a civilization, a way of life. For Dewey, too, considers the distinctions between realms as secular and sacred, profane and holy, lower and higher, a realm of ends against a realm of mere means, the temporal and the eternal, the "merely" human and the divine, the natural and the supernatural as being socially reactionary, undemocratic, and a denial of intelligence.

This is not to suggest that Dewey is a Reconstructionist! But it is to suggest that there is much in Dewey which can help Reconstructionists clarify their thoughts and help them to articulate their positon with awareness of its philosophic implications.

There may be a religious basis for de-

votion to intelligence. The rabbis taught that a man should worship God with all his gifts. "If you are beautiful, honor Him who has made you so, fear Him and praise Him with the beauty he has bestowed upon you. If your voice is beautiful and you are seated in the house of prayer, rise up and honor the Lord with your voice." The nephew of Rabbi Eliezer ha-Kappar had a beautiful voice, and his uncle was wont to say to him: "Hiyya, my son, rise up and honor the Lord with that which He has bestowed upon you."

Is it not proper, nay, urgent for a man today to say to himself: "Rise up, and honor God with the intelligence which He has bestowed upon you!" What greater gift than intelligence has God given to man? What greater religious duty is there than to use that gift in His service: to ferret out His secret hiding places in the relations between fact and fact, between truth and truth, between value and value, between man and man? If it is man's duty to worship or serve God with even his "evil nature," is it not his duty to serve God with his intelligence?

MILTON R. KONVITZ

OTTO WEININGER—AN EXAMPLE OF JEWISH SELF-HATE

THE MIND AND DEATH OF A GENIUS, by David Abrahamsen, Columbia University Press. 228 pp. $3.

WHEN Otto Weininger, brilliant author of the important and massive *Sex and Character,* shot himself to death at the age of 23, one of the most perverse individuals of the twentieth century left what was to him a tortuous and painful world. For Otto Weininger, who was one of the most fascinating products of a Vienna which turned out men like Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler, Jacob Wasserman and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, was afflicted with schizophrenia, just as were Vincent Van Gogh, August Strindberg (a Weininger admirer) and Friedrich Hölderlin. Weininger was more than a schizophrenic: he was a genius who at 23 had written a great book, and he was a violent Jew-hater, although he was born a Jew.

Dr. Abrahamsen, a well-known psychiatrist now connected with the Department of Psychiatry of Columbia University, has written, in *The Mind and Death of a Genius,* what amounts to a psychiatric case history of a man who was a classic example in *Selbst-hass,* or self-hate. Weininger could not live with himself, so deep was his own contempt for himself, and thus he put an end to his twisted life in the same room where, seventy-six years earlier, Beethoven had died.

The son of Jewish parents, Otto Weininger was blocked in his early youth from developing into a normal human being. His father, a Jew, was an anti-Semite who treated his own wife as though she were a chattel. Otto's two sisters married Christians and his brother turned Christian even though he was married twice, both times to Jewish women.

Otto himself was a brilliant student who knew seven languages well, wrote poetry and received his doctorate at the age of 22, when he wrote *Sex and Character.*

He became a Christian when he earned his doctorate, but apparently the act did not win him any peace of mind, for a year later he was a suicide. That Weininger was unable to find satisfaction in living, that he hated himself and his own people, that he was twisted in personality

are all phases of his life which are reflected in his book, in which he describes woman as greatly inferior to man and, therefore, all femininity inferior to masculinity. He calls Judaism, the faith into which he was born, a feminine and weak religion. Thus to him Judaism and women are both weak and hateful. Dr. Abrahamsen writes that: "It has already been said that Weininger attributed feminine traits to the Jewish people. Would it be far-fetched to see a possible symbolic connection between his anti-feminism and his anti-Semitism? Being of Jewish blood, he was loud in his hatred of the Jews in order to show that he was not really different from other men." And then Dr. Abrahamsen writes that Weininger's homosexual traits lead him to denounce women to show that he was not different from other men.

In his contempt at his weaknesses, Weininger attempted to "deny Judaism because that would mean to deny himself. Basically the denial of his mother religion was also directed against his mother, whom he hated." He felt, according to Dr. Abrahamsen, impotent and castrated. The psychiatrist adds that "in general this feeling of castration is the deepest unconscious root of anti-Semitism, and it was the basis of Weininger's monstrous anti-Semitism."

Sex and Character was a brilliantly written book and its major importance lies in the fact that it recognized that there are elements of masculinity in women and femininity in men. Weininger's realization of the "law of sexual attraction," then almost unknown, is also significant. But Weininger as a case in self-hate, as a Jew who hated his own people and, therefore, himself, is worth deep study.

Genius in itself is not enough to excuse a kind of thinking which leads to action resulting in the death of millions of people, for Weininger's theories were exploited by Goebbels and the other Jew-baiting Nazis. Weininger's twisted personality helped create a lasting book. Was it worth its eventual cost? If the answer is to be given in the cost of humanity, it is No.

HAROLD U. RIBALOW

EAST MEETS WEST

MEETING OF EAST AND WEST, by F. S. C. Northrop, Macmillan Co., New York, 1946, 531 *pp.* + *xii.* $6.00.

THOSE who are at all sensitive to the truth of advertisements know that Mr. Northrop's book is infinitely more important than a mere rebuttal of Kipling's aphorism, "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." It states the fundamental problem facing the world today, indicates the source of the conflict and, as a good constructive work, indicates the way out. The book is replete with analyses of the following cultures: Mexican, European, Russian, American and the far Eastern. All this is done with deep philosophical insight. So say the publisher and some recent reviewers.

Miraculous would be the result if a writer, attempting to comment intelligently on material of this extended range, did not make occasional errors or questionable interpretations. In that light, for a reviewer to list these errors, if the major assumptions and thesis were not affected by them, would be mere pedantry. However when errors abound, when the major thesis is questionable and its method of corroboration dubious, exactly such a procedure is required. It is difficult to know what treatment Northrop deserves. Time after time while reading this book, I recalled Russell's remark that while

studying James he felt that he was in a warm bath getting hotter and hotter all the time, and not knowing exactly when to scream. The originality of the book consists in an attempt to locate the origin of the conflict in rival philosophical systems, and to demonstrate that reconstruction in philosophical theory is prerequisite to any extended social reform.

The West can learn from the Orient the true nature of total experience, and the East from Western science the theoretical components of things. It is sheer dogmatism on the part of the West either to insist that it has a philosophy adequate for science or to dismiss as sheer mysticism the Eastern preaching of the union of the self with all the essential stuff of nature. Certainly that union is immediately experienceable if one will go through the routine taught by Eastern sages.

To corroborate his thesis Northrop reinterprets much of modern philosophy and analyzes extensively Eastern culture, especially Chinese painting. In the West Locke is the *bête-noir*. It was he who misled modern philosophy. On the one hand, he is taken as the prime exponent of human rights over property rights, and on the other, as the provider of the philosophy which was in many ways responsible for the extreme stress upon property in the 18th century.

It would be comparatively easy to demonstrate that Locke's defense of property was not an unrestricted one, that he limited property rights. As a matter of fact, in view of the seventeenth century state-of-affairs, defense of property was a most liberal position, and many of the great liberals of the "Century of Genius," to use Whitehead's phrase, must be turning in their graves, seeing how great corporations are using their words to buttress reaction. Moreover, many of the reactionary defenses of property in the 18th century were quite un-Lockian—e.g., Hamilton's. All of this, though not indicated in the text, might still be compatible, if not Locke but the pragmatic effects of his words were stressed. Men preach reform and their words, put in a strange social alembic, develop into distilled reaction.

Let us skip merrily across continents and see if the author's comments on the East are helpful. There, too, a dissenting, but hushed, voice seems to be in order. This reviewer makes no claim to authority and must rely on reports of what he takes to be careful Oriental students. Perhaps some of them, especially Hu Shih, have over-emphasized the pragmatic and anti-metaphysical Chinese philosophy and religion. Perhaps the dualism they find between Chinese social orientation and Buddhist metaphysics is overdone. But the evidence seems overwhelming that one cannot, except with trepidation, speak of the "Eastern unity" and find it in a philosophy of "total experience."

Moreover, the evidence accumulated by the author seems dubious. Much comes from an analysis of Chinese art. In the first place, not all Chinese art is one. There are realistic and "geometric" periods and there are naturalistic and symbolic periods. Secondly, the great differences between Eastern and Western paintings are in part attributable to differences in technique and social position of the artist.

Lack of space forbids extended analysis of Northrop's other contributions. With apologies for lack of documentation, it seems that the author's treatment of Mexico is vitiated by appeal to instinct in interpreting national character. His remarks on Marx and the Soviet Union are incredibly naive. Surely Marx would have laughed at the attempt to locate his and the Soviet's weakness in terms of the difficulties of the dialectic. "Quite

Hegelian," the Moor would have bellowed. Incidentally, Hegel comes in for quite a rough treatment. It has become a commonplace to locate the intellectual sources of totalitarianism in Fichte and Hegel. Much is to be said for that view, but Northrop's substantiation of that thesis by an appeal to "the real is the rational" slogan of Hegel is quite bad. For, if anything, that idea was a radical one and was especially so employed in the early days of Hegel's life.

Though the author's treatment of art is extended and at times enlightening, it seems clear that all he is doing is repeating the truism that an esthetic experience is not a cognitive one, and that the object of an esthetic experience is not to be taken as a sign of another object. To the artist, the strokes on the canvas may all be symbolic, but that strictly speaking is beside the point when emphasis is placed upon the esthetic experience. But coupled with this is an uncanny emphasis upon exactly the sign-status of the object of art. Uncanny is the word for the author's ability to discover the female aspect of nature depicted by a straight line on a white canvas. It is quite difficult to see how art can discover the metaphysical traits of nature.

Even if the author's epistemology and esthetic are correct, in what sense can an ethic be based on them? Surely it is a logical error to deduce an ethical proposition, an "ought" proposition, from a factual one. In the last chapter, entitled "Practical Wisdom," we are told all the reforms deducible from his philosophy will and must wait till men are not governed as at present by greed and lust.

Northrop's heart is in the right place. He wants amity; so do we all. Possibly a major lesson of the book is its explicit challenge of the thesis that Western religion, especially Catholic Christendom, has a unique road to salvation. Those who find such challenges exhilarating and necessary will champion the author for voicing their views.

Northrop demands a philosophical "stand-point," in the light of which specific answers can be judged as to their relevance. This demand is certainly just, but soon the word "synthesis" replaces "stand-point," and the old cry is once again heard that unless we achieve what previous cultures did, a synthesis between knowledge and value, between science and art, we perish. But which previous culture achieved this synthesis and which previous culture did not perish? Plato's Republic is not an image of Athens, Aristotle is a harbinger of the Hellenistic period, Aquinas was much abused in his day, and Dante's Italy was not quite "medieval." Moreover, philosophical syntheses we have today in abundance. Whitehead, Cassirer and Husserl have all "accounted" for man in all his aspects, as a cognitive, feeling and spiritual being. Recently Pepper has given us four equally self-consistent schemes and bids us choose. Each one is complete and adequate, we are promised. But these systems will languish on the shelves of library stacks, and the trifling contributions, such as Hume's analysis of cause or Peirce's account of "leading" principles or Russell's definition of number, will be remembered as long as philosophy respects clarity and achievement.

This does not imply an ivory-tower position for philosophy. Certainly there is enough rubbish in popular ethical and political positions that must be cleared away. Certainly there is a job for philosophy in clarifying the concepts men swear by and die for.

But clarity, even if necessary, is not sufficient. The primary job of many social institutions and interests is to block the clear and confound the obvious. Reconstructing these institutions demands

the energy of all, and can not be achieved by mere philosophic analysis. But we will not necessarily move. The best plans for change may perish and then once again the philosopher will be blamed as a scapegoat for not providing a synthesis prerequisite to any major overhauling.

SIDNEY MORGENBESSER

NOT REVENGE, BUT JUSTICE

NAZI-GERMANY'S WAR AGAINST THE JEWS, Proposals of the American Jewish Conference for Inclusion in the German Peace-Treaty. Foreword by Henry Monsky. Prepared and Compiled by Seymour Krieger. (1947)

THIS book offers a historical presentation of the fate allotted by Nazi-Germany to the Jews and establishes by documentary evidence the Jewish claims and demands which a just peace-treaty should satisfy.

No national, racial or religious group suffered at the hands of the Nazis to such an extent as European Jewry. Its very foundations were utterly uprooted and its individual members cruelly destroyed, beyond the possibility of reshaping their lives in their ancient communities. For the first time in history, international courts have to decide upon the responsibility for starting an aggressive war and for committing crimes against humanity. If the surviving instigators and prepetrators of such deeds are brought to justice it is no more than fair that the pitiable remains of European Jewry, the first and main victims of that unique inhumanity, should be regarded as fully entitled to a say in the forthcoming final peace-conference, or that, at least, their well justified desires should be heard and fulfilled.

Since the scattered remnants of Europan Jewry are practically not in a position to speak for themselves, the American Jewish Conference is indeed authorized to conduct the cause of those who were murdered or were deprived of their economic and social existence, and had or have still to find shelter somewhere in the world. The measures proposed mean to make good as far as possible, the damage done by the Nazi terror. Germany waged war, as her highest leaders have admitted on countless occasions, against everything Jewish, killing individual Jews and destroying Jewish communal life.

Economic reparation ought, therefore, to be made to individuals, as well as to congregations and associations. Where no heirs can be found, the expropriated property, or its equivalent in money and goods, should be used to resettle refugees in countries of their choice. The proposals provide for a body to administer the ownerless Jewish property and the payment of reparations to the Jewish community as a token by which Germany admits her guilt. This body, representative of the Jews throughout the world, is to act as a trustee for Jewish interests. The laws of escheat should not apply.

Any German government must be made to declare that anti-Jewish activities are punishable offenses, and must obligate all under its jurisdiction to treat them as such. For the time being, those Jews who are still in Germany should not be left under German control, but should be subject to inter-allied authorities alone. In the new "Reich," Jews—if any are left—should enjoy all rights they had in the pre-Nazi state.

All these measures are justly and logically derived from the fact that Nazi-Germany treated the Jews as a distinct people. Therefore, her legal successors cannot escape the obligation towards the Jewish people as a whole.

As a matter of act, all these provisions

can be effective only if there will be a powerful authority able and willing to enforce them. Several times national or religious groups have been promised civic equality or minority rights. But the governments involved evaded their obligations, and gave way to popular pressure or to their own nationalist inclinations. That has been particularly true of every law designed to assure Jewish rights. Unless steps are taken once and for all to make international law more than a dead letter, we must give up the hope that the greatest catastrophe in our history may become the decisive turning-point in international life. More than ever the treatment of that extra-territorial people, the Jews, may serve as the test whether or not the society of nations has reached the stage of a legally organized and well functioning world community.

To justify its demands, the book outlines the twenty-five year campaign against the Jews from the beginnings of the Nazi party up to the collapse of Germany. It also contains an excerpt of the Nuremberg trial record and evaluates the facts it revealed about the Nazi attitude towards Jews within and without Germany.

This chapter is followed by the most extensive and, for the future historian, the most important part of the work—the documentary evidence. It is known that hundreds of thousands of documents—letters, files, top secret instructions, records, minutes, reports—fell into the hands of the advancing allied forces, revealing probably everything the German rulers had in their minds, their plans and actions as well as their most hidden intentions. A selection of several hundred pieces is compiled in the present work. Through this material and the sworn affidavits of witnesses, the entire history of the Nazi conspiracy lies clearly unfolded before our eyes. Since these documents cover the whole period of the anti-Jewish war (beginning as far back as the 1920's) a virtually unlimited insight into the course of the events is presented to us thanks to German thoroughness and red tape. If anything remains that has not been unearthed, it would hardly add any decisive feature to the picture.

Though the arrangement of the written material is rather haphazard, the reader will find in it a truly exhaustive description of the events. He will find more, namely a distinct and irrefutable characterization of the persons who planned and carried out the most horrible mass murder in recorded history. Even on the much debated question whether a considerable portion of the German population, not immediately implicated in the atrocities, must have known of them some light is shed. The procedure of the final extermination took nearly three years. During that time, so many Germans—military, police and S. S. men and women — were needed to execute the ghastly work, that it is unbelievable that millions more at home could have been kept from all knowledge of it. The collective responsibility of the German people (of course in varying degree), can therefore not be denied. This statement is important precisely because of its practical significance for the accusations and demands made in the book.

We Jews repudiate the thought of revenge. But we owe it to ourselves and to the world to insist on our being restored to full human dignity. It is the common cause not only of all Jewry but of all humanity that the present work of the American Jewish Conference advocates. For the sake of justice and fairness the proposed measures should not only receive from the signatories to the treaty sympathetic approval in principle, but should be effectively put into practice.

MAX WIENER